

**REMARKS**

In the Office Action that was mailed on October 7, 2003, the Abstract was objected to; and claims 1-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Hicks (U.S. Patent No. 6,615,184) ("Hicks"). The foregoing objections and rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claims 1-17 are pending in the subject application, of which claims 1, 7, 11, 16, and 17 are independent claims.

**Amendments to the Specification:**

The Abstract is amended herein, taking the examiner's comments into consideration and directed to overcoming the objection thereto. Because the Abstract (as amended herein) is less than 150 words, the Applicant respectfully requests that the examiner withdraw the objection thereto.

**Amendments to the Claims:**

Claims 1 and 7 are amended herein to recite that the "first" sales information is received "from a seller of a first commodity," and that the purchase information, which comprises "second" sales information, is received "from a purchaser of a second commodity." Claims 2-3, 5-6, and 8-10 are amended in accordance with the amendments to claims 1 and 7, to preserve adequate antecedent basis for all claim elements. Support for such amendments may be found in the Specification at page 14, lines 11-16 and page 21, line 23 to page 22, line 15 and in Figure 5 at operation S104, Figure 10 at operation S407, and Figure 13 at operation S501.

Claims 7 and 10-16 are amended herein to remove "step-plus-function"-type language. Claims 12 and 13 are amended herein to depend from claim 11 instead of claim 10. Claims 1-17 are amended herein to correct minor typographical errors. Claims 1 and 7 are amended herein to change the words "consisting of" to "comprising." Claims 2, 4, and 8 are amended herein to change the word "includes" to "comprises." Claim 14 is amended herein to change the term "valid" to "invalid." Claim 5 is amended herein to change the term "unidentified-validness" to "invalid." Care has been exercised to avoid the introduction of new matter.

**Claims 5, 10, and 14:**

The Applicant thanks the examiner for calling the Applicant's attention to the discrepancy surrounding the determination of whether information falls within the range, in regard to claims 10 and 14. (Office Action, p. 7). Herein, the Applicant has amended claim 13 to depend from claim 11 to correct a typographical error. In addition, the Applicant has amended claims 5 and 14 to recite "invalid" information to correct a typographical error. The Applicant apologizes for any confusion.

**Rejections of the Claims:**

Independent claims 1 and 7 of the subject application (as amended herein) recite "receiving a first sales information, which identifies a deal of a first commodity, from a seller of the first commodity ... receiving purchase information, which comprises personal information of a purchaser of a second commodity and a second sales information, from the purchaser of the second commodity ... [and] storing ... the received purchase information as valid purchase information in a second storing part" when the second sales information is stored in the first storing part. Independent claims 11 and 16 of the subject application (as amended herein) recite "receiving first deal identifying information from a seller; ... receiving second deal identifying information and personal information from a purchaser; and comparing the second deal identifying information and the first deal identifying information stored in said first storing part." Independent claim 17 of the subject application (as amended herein) recites "a unit that receives first deal identifying information from a seller;... a unit that receives second deal identifying information and personal information from a purchaser; and a unit that compares the second deal identifying information and the first deal identifying information stored in said first storing part."

In the present invention, first sales information on a transaction involving a first commodity is collected from a seller. (Specification, p. 14, lines 11-16; Fig. 5, S104). Purchase information is collected from a purchaser, which comprises second sales information on a transaction involving a second commodity and personal information about the purchaser. (Specification, p. 21, line 23 to p. 22, line 15; Fig. 10, S407; Fig. 13, S501). The first and

second sales information are compared to determine whether the second sales information has already been received from the seller of the second commodity. (Specification, p. 22, line 20 – p. 24, line 17). The collected first and second sales information in the present invention involve completed commodity transactions. (Specification, p. 13, line 6; p. 19, lines 21-23).

In contrast, the supplier information and customer information that are collected by Hicks are information about a future commodity transaction. Clearly, Hicks does not collect the same information as the present invention, and therefore cannot anticipate the same. Therefore, independent claims 1, 7, 11, 16, and 17 of the subject application (as amended herein) are patentably distinguishable over Hicks. In addition, dependent claims 2-6, 8-10, and 12-15 (as amended herein) are allowable based in part on their dependency, directly or indirectly, from one of independent claims 1, 7, 11, 16, and 17.

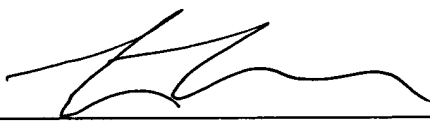
Withdrawal of the foregoing objections and rejections is respectfully requested.

There being no further objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance, which action is courteously requested. Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters. If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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